

2012 Greater Midland Application

(DRAFT #2 – 5-16-12)

Section 1: Collaboration, Partnerships and Youth as a Community Priority

(170 points of total 500 points)

In our search for the nation’s 100 Best Communities for Young People, we are looking for communities that have made a special commitment to focusing on youth and including young people in decision-making. That commitment should incorporate all sectors of the community, from local schools and youth service providers to businesses, charitable organizations and local government. And most importantly, that commitment should be carried out through concerted community efforts. The following questions will help us determine what your community is doing to make youth a priority.

1.1 Prioritizing Youth

How does your community make youth a priority in budgeting, policymaking, services, or other ways?

(400 word maximum)

Because children are such a top priority in Midland, a community-driven Youth Master Plan (YMP) was formed in 2010 to help galvanize the ways in which youth-serving and faith-based organizations, government, education, labor, medical/mental health practitioners, funders, and interested youth and adults collaborate for kids’ sake.

With execution of the YMP in mind, outcome data on youth matters ranging from "pre-birth" to adulthood collected by Midland’s Legacy Center for Community Success has helped identify areas of success and those needing further concentration. 200+ participants identified gaps and developed goals, strategies, and action plans to address targeted opportunities. Based on agreed-upon areas of concern, goals were developed relating to parenting, program access, agency collaboration, community engagement, and developmental assets. Success in meeting these goals is broadly tracked.

Youth-focused organizations are using the YMP to plan programs and activities, and funders are utilizing it to guide financing for impactful programs.

A noteworthy application of Midland’s YMP is seen in developmental asset-building programs through Midland’s Juvenile Courts. Additionally, a 2011 review shows that developmental assets increased about 15%, risk-taking behaviors decreased in Midland County adolescents between 2006-2011, and the influence of “positive peers” increased by 5%. Addressing social determinants of risk-taking behaviors has resulted in significant improvements in delinquency

and health-related outcomes. Delinquency, recidivism rates, and offenses by younger siblings of court wards are also down. These programs' outcomes include a 35% reduction in delinquency, 56% reduction in recidivism/re-arrests, and cost savings to the courts of approximately \$2.1 million over the past four years.

Another demonstration of how youth are prioritized in Midland County is shown in our ability to engage youth as change agents in community matters. For instance, as part of a local "Kick Butts Day" campaign, teens collected and measured the amount of cigarette butts at seven local playgrounds, then prepared follow-up presentations to advocate for tobacco-free zones in children's play areas. Throughout 2011, teen volunteers also engaged in a variety of activities to protect kids from tobacco, including having informational displays during Midland Mall's Kids Day, Midland's Riverdays Festival, and our County Fair.

In another project, youth, along with Midland County's Tobacco Reduction Coalition, advocated for a smoke-free air law enacted in 2010 that protects children and adults from secondhand smoke in restaurants and bars. Also, Academic and Career Education Academy youth participated in a 2011 community scan related to marketing of new and emerging tobacco and non-tobacco products.

1.2 Support for the Most Vulnerable Young People

How does your community work to ensure the well-being of its most vulnerable young people? Examples of vulnerable populations might include youth in foster care, LGBT youth, pregnant and parenting teens, youth with disabilities, and others, although you may reference work with any vulnerable group.

(400 word maximum)

Midland County not only continues to utilize its many outstanding established programs for the betterment of our most vulnerable youth; it also creates new programs as needed. Here are some of the results of new and long-standing initiatives to care for our kids.

-Delinquency rates continue to fall: since 1998, there has been a 77% reduction in adjudicated offenses/probation violations. Midland Juvenile Care Center's Day Treatment Program achieved a 0% recidivism rate for the first year following graduation from the program in 2011. A coordinated Truancy Protocol between the schools and the Court involving early intervention with a Mental Health Youth Specialist who meets with the youth prior to court involvement has resulted in only half of the youth being petitioned into court over the last three years (2009-2011). Of these youth, 83% did not commit a new crime after the case closed.

-Teen pregnancies have fallen each of the last three recordable years (from 104 pregnancies in 2007 to 94 in 2009), due in part to multiple agencies collaborating to increase awareness and resources.

-The Michigan Youth Opportunity Initiative, founded in Midland and Mt. Pleasant, assists older foster youth with asset-building and life skills training, budgeting, housing, leadership

opportunities, and help seeking college scholarships. Under Michigan's Department of Human Services (DHS), the program also matches funds earned by foster kids to help pay for smart purchases like cars for work.

-Notable this year is the Baby Court Program, a multi-agency team approach to providing intensive intervention to families with a child 0-3 years old that have come into the abuse/neglect court system. The program was grant-funded for its first three years. It has proven its worth so much so that even in these tight budgetary times, Midland County is continuing the program using general funds. Follow-up studies of the children indicate 75% show typical developmental progress (the other 25% generally have congenital cognitive impairments), and 100% show typical social-emotional progress.

-Recovering Youth Futures is a new initiative to more effectively deal with substance abuse problems among our youth. This is a comprehensive, integrated, and systematic approach to treating adolescents involving the courts, schools, Community Mental Health, DHS, and other community agencies, both public and private. This program will bring together under one roof proven therapies that will depend upon the degree/severity of the abusive behavior. Once funding is obtained, this large undertaking is projected to start in January 2013.

1.3 Community Collaboration

In communities across the country, collaborations consisting of schools, local government leaders, nonprofits, businesses, faith-based organizations, parents, and young people are working together to ensure that all young people have the supports necessary to succeed in high school and beyond. Collaborations that are working to support the educational needs of young people can take a variety of forms and vary in scope and size of effort. Some collaborations focus on a single school, while others focus on a school feeder pattern, a school district, a neighborhood, a specific geographic area or an entire city.

Please describe the ways in which your community collaborates across sectors to ensure positive outcomes for young people. In your response, please tell us if you have a formal or informal collaborative effort and provide a brief description including overall purpose, lead or convening organization, and scope of the effort (i.e. city-wide, specific schools, school district, neighborhood, county-wide, etc.); describe the goals and key strategies being implemented by your community's collaborative; identify the number of partners and types of sectors they represent (i.e. nonprofit, government, education, business, etc.); and address the outcomes that have resulted from these partnerships.

(500 word maximum)

The Health and Human Services Council (HHSC), the official collaborative body for the Midland area, is a network of representatives from local nonprofits, courts, foundations, health and human services organizations, government, schools, churches, and others working to promote Midland's welfare. It's evolved over 20 years through the commitment of agencies that share common challenges and concerns.

In 2010, HHSC helped develop a community-wide Youth Master Plan, which is resulting in understanding what's working, where gaps are, and what organizations can do to ensure that youth have access to needed services.

In March 2012, the HHSC held their annual Summit to report on the progress that had been made with the Youth Developmental Assets Survey, which is focused on The Search Institute Developmental Assets. This survey of 6,000+ Midland County youth showed that collaborative programming raised the number of assets (such as positive peers, resistance, restraint, and presence of adult role models) in our youth by 15% and, in turn, lowered the number of risk-taking behaviors in which our kids participated. There were significant decreases in underage alcohol use and drunk driving-related activities as well as other negative behaviors such as trouble with police, suicide ideation or attempts, and eating disorders.

Another successful collaborative involves the Midland Area Partnership for Drug-Free Youth (MAP) Coalition, which functions as an advisory board to assist with assessing community youth needs, increasing community partnerships, advising on programming, and assisting with organizational and community policy development. MAP is comprised of representatives from area law enforcement, nonprofits, community centers, mental health facilities, government representatives, faith-based organizations, members of the courts, and community volunteers.

This group actively advocates for local and state policies preventing youth-related alcohol and drug use/misuse. They also organize a host of positive youth activities presented as an alternative to drug and/or alcohol use.

In the past year, MAP has celebrated successes with their in-school programming, showing a positive change in youth as well hosting over 350 youth at a 2012 Spring Break event promoting positive alternatives to alcohol and drug use.

Another successful collaboration is "Dump Your Drugs." With prescription drug misuse/abuse continuing to be a problem for our nation's youth, Midland's Police and Sheriff's departments have partnered with MAP since 2009 to collect and destroy more than one ton of unused/outdated prescription drugs, in effect removing them from homes where children may be able to access them. In addition to holding various community events in 2011, the collaborative added a 24/7 dropbox at our Law Enforcement Center, providing one more way citizens can safely and discreetly dispose of unwanted drugs and medications.

Collaboration with the schools is also a priority for Midlanders. Family and Children's Services (FCS) helps schools by offering free, confidential counseling to teens, and partners with an area elementary school on issues surrounding parenting and behavior problems with younger kids. This program helps children who struggle with barriers to success, and gives parents tools for creating a supportive home environment to foster educational achievement.

Section 2: The Five Promises

(250 points of total 500 points)

Research and experience demonstrate that children’s chances of success in life greatly increase when they experience the key supports – or “Five Promises” – they need to be successful. The Five Promises include Caring Adults, Safe Places, A Healthy Start, An Effective Education, and Opportunities to Help Others. According to Every Child, Every Promise (2006), more than two-thirds of America’s young people experience too few of the Five Promises to have a reasonable chance of success. In this section you will be asked to provide examples of how your community helps bring the Five Promises into the lives of youth.

For each question, please describe in detail 2-3 examples of outstanding programs or services. Space permitting, briefly mention additional efforts to give us a sense of the breadth of the community’s work in that area.

2.1 Caring Adults

Every child needs support and guidance from caring adults in their families, schools, and communities. These include positive relationships with teachers, mentors, neighbors, coaches, and youth volunteers.

How does your community ensure that all young people have access to Caring Adults? What challenges does your community face in this area, and how has your approach addressed those challenges?

In your response, please describe in detail 2-3 examples of outstanding programs or services. Space permitting, briefly mention additional efforts to give us a sense of the breadth of the community’s work in this area.

(400 word maximum)

Midland’s biggest challenges to ensuring that children have caring adults in their lives is making the community aware of the need for mentors, recruiting and retaining volunteers, and meeting the needs of children who could easily slip through the cracks. A wide variety of programs and partnerships go a long way towards overcoming our challenges.

Midland has a broad spectrum of nonprofits and volunteer groups that bring supportive adults into kids’ lives. Just a few: Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boy & Girl Scouts, Camp Centaur, Young Life, Midland County Youth Leadership, Midland County’s Campfire USA, the Rock (faith-based) Youth Center, Safe and Sound Child Advocacy Center, and Midland Community (recreation) Center. Programming usually involves partnerships with other nonprofits, education, and businesses such as the Chamber of Commerce, Northwood University, United Way-Midland County, Dow Corning Corporation, Dow Chemical Company, MidMichigan Health, banks and credit unions... the list is endless.

Partners help address the challenges of getting volunteers and keeping needed programs going by recruiting volunteers from among their own ranks; promoting programs within their organizations and throughout the community; and donating services, funds, or materials to different efforts.

Some successful programs offering caring adults:

-Girls on the Run, for 3rd-5th-grade girls, combines training for a 5K run along with healthy-living education. Sponsored by Shelterhouse (domestic and sexual violence agency), the program brings about self-esteem, life skills development, mentoring relationships, and physical training - all accomplished through an active collaboration with girls and their parents, Shelterhouse staff, schools, volunteers, and the larger community. Since the program's 2007 start, female volunteers have mentored/coached 1,200+ girls, with the program gaining momentum: the spring 2012 program had nearly double the number of girls compared to 2011.

-A West Midland Family Center afterschool program offers participating children free transportation from Bullock Creek Schools, educational activity, snacks, and mentors. Additionally, a six-week summer program for 200 preschool through middle school kids provides fun, healthful activities with staff and specially-trained teen volunteers serving as positive role models.

-Since 1995, Mid-Michigan Royal Family KIDS (RFK), sponsored by two Midland churches, has provided 7-11-year-old abused and neglected children with a summer camp experience to help build healthy new life-changing patterns. Annually, about 100 campers attend one of two available, weeklong camps, led by adult volunteers who've received specialized training. In 2009, RFK expanded to include a youth mentoring program involving one-on-one adult/child pairings plus club meetings and field trips.

2.2 Safe Places

Every child needs and deserves to be physically and emotionally safe in their homes, schools, neighborhoods, communities, and on the Internet. You may have "Promise Places" in your community or structured, supervised activities for out-of-school time.

How does your community ensure that all young people have access to Safe Places throughout their day? What challenges does your community face in this area, and how has your approach addressed those challenges?

In your response, please describe in detail 2-3 examples of outstanding programs or services. Space permitting, briefly mention additional efforts to give us a sense of the breadth of the community's work in this area.

(400 word maximum) This question relates to one of the 10 Grad Nation indicators, OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PARTICIPATION.

Greater Midland realizes that in order to sustain and grow our community, we must include a focus on youth support systems that emphasize academic, psychological, social, and physical well-being. While Midland offers many safe environments for youth, some of our families with financial or other challenges (e.g., low-income or single-parent homes) do not have the time, resources, or money to provide safe, supervised opportunities for their children.

As a result, outreach and assistance remain top focuses of many area organizations such as Coleman Railway Family Center, Midland's Community Center, North Midland Family Center, Camp Fire USA, and Shelterhouse. These organizations, along with Salvation Army, Junior Achievement, Chippewa Nature Center, and many schools, offer free and scholarship-based services specifically for youth from low-income households. Through collaborative efforts, youth have the chance to participate in before and afterschool programs, summer day camps, and counseling support groups that provide safe, structured, and nurturing environments.

Shelterhouse, in particular, provides free and safe housing, plus counseling, for domestic and sexual violence victims and their families. Youth support and prevention programs address building healthy relationships and safe environments. Four research-based programs (Safe Dates; Structured Intervention for Traumatized Children, Adolescents, and Parents; Girls on the Run; and Mom's Club/Kids Club) improve relationship skills and encourage healing. 2011 prevention efforts reached 20,000+ people, including school-aged youth.

One exciting new initiative in Midland promises to result in a safer, more cohesive, and friendlier community for children from all segments of our population. Midland Neighboring, begun in 2011 by Midland's Mayor, brings churches and community groups together in a coordinated effort to encourage citizens to be better neighbors. Midland is only the third known city in the U.S. to develop such a program, and the effort – started locally with a handful of churches – now includes nearly 20 area churches and a growing list of supporters with goals to produce promotional materials, share the vision at community and church events, and promote activities such as neighborhood block parties to bring people together for the sole purpose of getting to know one another. The concept is bringing back the practice of caring about and looking out for one's neighbor, including our community's youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

Programs like Midland Neighboring, plus a variety of positive, diverse alternatives offered by business, schools, nonprofits, faith-based groups, and government are helping our youth to feel and remain safe.

2.3 A Healthy Start

All children need healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthful habits. These result from access to health care, regular health checkups and needed treatment, good nutrition and exercise, health education, and positive role models who demonstrate good physical and psychological health.

How does your community ensure that all young people have A Healthy Start in life? What challenges does your community face in this area, and how has your approach addressed

those challenges?

In your response, please describe in detail 2-3 examples of outstanding programs or services. Space permitting, briefly mention additional efforts to give us a sense of the breadth of the community's work in this area.

(400 word maximum)

Midland's healthcare challenges are linked to the fact that Michigan has been in a recession for 10+ years. With fewer high-paying jobs and health benefits more difficult to provide, many are without coverage. Current unemployment levels, though slightly lower than in more recent years, still negatively impact pocketbooks and, subsequently, healthcare options.

Despite difficulties, there is caring help: there's State Medicaid for children at 150% of poverty, pregnant women at 185% of poverty, and adults at 100% of poverty. Michigan's Department of Community Health program, MICHild, insures children to 200% of poverty with a small deductible. Through Children's Special Health Care Services, an RN coordinates family support and care to qualifying children with chronic special health needs. Diagnosis and treatment is free, and there are no income limitations.

Locally, Midland's Health Department offers childhood immunizations for many vaccine-preventable diseases. Midland's Communicable Disease Clinic treats and educates about childhood diseases, and Community Nurses provides health education through schools and health fairs. Additionally, pregnant mothers and babies can access a program focusing on prenatal/infant care. A nurse, social worker, physician, and dietician collaborate to promote healthy births and a great start on life.

Midlanders place a priority on charitable assistance and healthy lifestyles in many other ways:

-Adopt-A-Child's Smile has given 1,044 low-income children much-needed, free dental care over its 24-year history, with approximately 50 dentists participating during that time.

-City Council supports subsidies so children of all socioeconomic backgrounds can enjoy recreational activities at little/no cost.

-The all-volunteer Non-Motorized Transportation Committee recently helped Midland gain national recognition as a bike-friendly community for increasing bicycling awareness/support and constructing more bike paths in Midland.

-Midland's Tennis Center led a community-wide effort resulting in our being named America's Best Tennis Town (2009) for our love of the sport, and we are one of few communities to build smaller, kid-sized "QuickStart" courts.

-Our minor league baseball team's mascot, in partnership with MidMichigan Health, leads "Lou E.'s Fit Club," encouraging 3,000+ youth members to make wise health decisions through kid-friendly information and activities involving goals and rewards.

With these and other youth-focused initiatives, it's clear to see why Midland County ranks high in Michigan's Health Rankings of 82 counties, with an overall ranking of 17th in health outcomes and 7th in health factors. Our favorable rankings are because we place a priority on children's health and collaborate to create positive outcomes for our kids.

2.4 Effective Education

We believe it is critical that all young people 1) receive an effective education; 2) graduate from high school on time; and 3) graduate ready to pursue post-secondary education.

How does your community ensure that all young people have an Effective Education that prepares them for college and the workplace and supplies with marketable skills that can be used later in life? What challenges does your community face in this area, and how has your approach addressed those challenges?

In your response, please be sure to highlight how your community is working to end the national dropout crisis, either through reducing its dropout rate or ensuring that graduation rates remain high, whichever is most applicable. Where appropriate, identify specific programs or services in place, the agencies or organizations involved, the populations served, and the outcomes observed. Please describe in detail 2-3 examples of outstanding programs or services. Space permitting, briefly mention additional efforts to give us a sense of the breadth of the community's work in this area.

(400 word maximum) This question relates to five of the 10 Grad Nation indicators, 4TH GRADE READING SCORES; 8TH GRADE SCIENCE AND MATH SCORES, HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATION, MINIMUM TWO YEARS POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION and ADOPTION OF COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS.

Midland area schools serve students with various academic, social, and emotional needs. In an effort to meet those needs and ensure that kids graduate, several initiatives have been devised.

One main focus at both Midland and H.H. Dow high schools is a segment of the 9th grade population exhibiting at-risk behaviors. Research suggests that 78% of students with failing grades during freshman year do not graduate. Our schools are dedicated to identifying freshmen struggling with the rigorous coursework of high school early in their first year. These students' basic need is to see themselves as a positive, proactive force in their own lives, as teens capable of going to college and getting a good job in the community.

Through collaboration with community and business organizations and generous funding for scholarships, field trips and hands-on learning experiences for at-risk 9th graders (plus struggling students in every grade) encourage interest in staying in and excelling at school. For instance, field trips to local construction companies exhibit Career Technical Education (CTE) opportunities. Trips to Midland's Center for the Arts offer chances to learn the importance of

history, science, and the arts. Trips to the nearby nonprofit, Bay Sail, promote environmental stewardship of our waterways through the Science Under Sail program, an engaging, interactive learning experience aboard a Saginaw Bay-based schooner. The program aligns with Michigan content standards and benchmarks for each major discipline, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Trips to Delta College (local community college), promote the sciences through such opportunities as a top-notch planetarium, and tours of the college campus are given to entice youth with the endless possibilities of continuing education.

Another initiative, E2020 (Midland's eLearning program), aligns with school curriculum to provide the same content as our current course offerings and allows students to recover lost credits. It can also be used to offer credit protection, a teacher-initiated program through which students having academic trouble are identified and offered the chance to complete specific coursework. Students meet with a facilitator, then complete coursework outside of school. When a student successfully finishes assigned material, the teacher converts a failing grade to one that earns credit. E2020 is provided as one-on-one, online instruction and encourages students to learn at their own pace – often critical for advancement to the next grade level for graduation. Since E2020's start in 2009, 200+ students have earned credit to graduate on time.

2.5 Opportunities to Help Others

All children and youth need and deserve the chance to make a difference - in their families, schools, communities, nation and world - through having models of caring behavior, awareness of the needs of others, a sense of personal responsibility to contribute to the larger society, and opportunities for volunteering, leadership and service.

How does your community ensure that all young people have Opportunities to Help Others, through volunteering, youth leadership programs, youth empowerment opportunities, and other methods? What challenges does your community face in this area, and how has your approach addressed those challenges?

Additionally, please share any formal or informal leadership structure that engages young people in planning or decision-making. Describe opportunities when youth had a voice at the table, and highlight community decisions that have involved young people.

In your response, please describe in detail 2-3 examples of outstanding programs or services. Space permitting, briefly mention additional efforts to give us a sense of the breadth of the community's work in this area.

(400 word maximum) This question relates to one of the 10 Grad Nation indicators, YOUTH SERVICE PARTICIPATION

With Midland feeling the effects of Michigan's 10-year recession, adult focus on volunteering often takes a backseat to the need to find and keep employment. To help where help is needed, Midland youth step in. From an early age, they learn the importance of volunteering and are provided countless opportunities to give back, such as through tutoring of younger students,

clothing and food drives, American Red Cross programs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, community cleanup days, and homebound senior visits.

One particular agency, United Way's Volunteer Center, connects young volunteers with 140 area schools and agencies that help them develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility for their community. Teens are recognized for their service contributions each week through United Way's Volunteer program.

An excellent example of youth making a difference is Midland County's Youth Action Council (MCYAC). Teens participate as community volunteers, proudly serving in ways as diverse as adopting a city park, Salvation Army bell-ringing, pairing with elementary-age children for recreation, and shopping for Sharing Tree gifts. They are successful fund-raisers, developing fun and creative ways to increase their grant-making capabilities. They are leaders, honing their skills at board/committee meetings, summer leadership camps, and by making presentations about their work to civic groups. MCYAC includes 40 area youth, ages 12-18. These students will have granted \$35,000 during the current term and have volunteered a collective 350 hours outside of meetings (which include another 630 hours!). These amazing young people learn about leading peer groups, respect for others, responsibility, and how to overcome challenges by working together.

To promote community service among youth, Dow Chemical (Midland's largest employer) recently launched "Community Gives," through which local elementary, middle, and high school groups, sports teams, and service clubs can earn funding for priority projects through volunteerism. In 2011, 200+ youth participated in this program, volunteering 900+ hours.

Midland's two Kiwanis Clubs sponsor high school student-led Key Clubs, offering youth opportunities to help others.

In 2011, an impressive 95% of students at Midland-based Northwood University volunteered locally through EXCEL, a college credit-earning program. Also at Northwood, Circle K volunteers have logged 1,000+ hours of community service. 200+ students participate annually, raising thousands of dollars for charity while making a difference.

This is just a glimpse of the programs that give youth the chance to help their neighbors and contribute to bridging the gap between community needs and lower volunteer numbers.

Section 3: Data and Outcomes

(50 points of a total 500 points)

In this section, we seek to learn more about your community and how it compares with others through the use of standardized metrics. We understand that this information may not be available in all cases for all communities, however, most applicants should be able to access the majority through public sources. Where applicable, links are provided to public

sources where data should be obtained. We will score these responses alongside your programmatic initiatives, so “low” scores or non-responses due to a lack of community-level data in this section will not disqualify your community. Please be as complete as possible in your responses.

3.1 Total community population

What is the total population of your community?

This information may be obtained at the U.S. Census Bureau’s new American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Please use ACS 2010 1-year estimates for your response. For information on using the new FactFinder, please see the FAQs on the *100 Best* homepage.

83,592

3.2 Community Youth Population

What is the population of young people under age 18 in your community?

This information may be obtained at the U.S. Census Bureau’s new American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Please use ACS 2010 1-year estimates for your response. For information on using the new FactFinder, please see the FAQs on the *100 Best* homepage.

3,603 (per 23.2% estimate divided into 83,592 as found at http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_NP01&prodType=narrative_profile)

3.3 Community Ethnicity

Please provide the ethnic breakdown of your community by providing the percentages for each of the Census Bureau groups below.

This information may be obtained at the U.S. Census Bureau’s new American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Please use ACS 2010 1-year estimates for your response. For information on using the new FactFinder, please see the FAQs on the *100 Best* homepage.

White: 94.4%

African American: 1.0%

American Indian and Alaska Native: 0.3%

Asian: 1.6%

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander: 0.0%

Some other race: 0.7%

Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 2.1%

(as of 2010, as found in:

http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?_afpt=table)

3.4 Graduation Rates

Please report the high school graduation rate for your community, and indicate if you are using the Editorial Projects in Education rate or a school district reported rate.

You may report this data in one of two ways. The preferred option is to use data located via the Editorial Projects in Education graduation rates map at <http://www.edweek.org/apps/gmap/>. You may also use district-reported data, but you must include some explanation about how that data is calculated in the large box below. You may also include trend data in the large box in either case, if available.

This question relates to one of the 10 Grad Nation indicators, HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.

Data reported to the State of Michigan Department of Education, as published by the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) at http://www.michigan.gov/cepi/0,1607,7-113-21423_30451_51357---,00.html

State of Michigan 2008 Cohort 4 Year Graduation Rate = 90.18% Drop Out Rate = 4.03%

State of Michigan 2009 Cohort 4 Year Graduation Rate = 90.97% Drop Out Rate = 4.78%

State of Michigan 2010 Cohort 4 Year Graduation Rate = 89.15% Drop Out Rate = 3.53%

3.5 Preschool Enrollment

Please report the number of young people enrolled in preschool programs in your community.

This information may be obtained at the U.S. Census Bureau's new American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Please use ACS 2010 1-year estimates for your response. For information on using the new FactFinder, please see the FAQs on the *100 Best* homepage.

This question relates to one of the 10 Grad Nation indicators, PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT.

666

3.6 Ninth Grade Promotion

Please report the percentage of students promoted from 9th grade to 10th grade in community high schools in the most recent year for which data is available.

This data may be obtained by contacting local school districts.

This question relates to one of the 10 Grad Nation indicators, 9TH GRADE PROMOTION.

100%

3.7 Violent Crime

Please report the number of violent crimes committed in your community.

This data may be located in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Crime in the United States 2012 report online. County-level data may be found at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/tables/10tbl10.xls/view>, and city-level data may be found at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/tables/10tbl08.xls/view>.

64 (as of 2010, as found in <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/tables/table-10/10tbl10mi.xls>)

3.8 Teen Birth Rate

Please report the number of births to women aged 15 to 19 in your community.

This information may be obtained at the U.S. Census Bureau's new American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Please use ACS 2010 1-year estimates for your response. For information on using the new FactFinder, Please see the FAQs on the *100 Best* homepage.

0 (as found in http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?_afpt=table)

3.9 Uninsured Youth Rate

Please report the number of uninsured children in your community.

This information may be obtained at the U.S. Census Bureau's new American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Please use ACS 2010 1-year estimates for your response. For information on using the new FactFinder, Please see the FAQs on the *100 Best* homepage.

This question relates to one of the 10 Grad Nation indicators, HEALTH CARE ACCESS.

2,508 (per 3% value reported in http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_NP01&prodType=narrative_profile)

3.10 Individuals Below Poverty Level

Please report the percentage of your community's population that is below the federal poverty level.

This information may be obtained at the U.S. Census Bureau's new American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Please use ACS 20100 1-year estimates for your response. For information on using the new FactFinder, Please see the FAQs on the *100 Best* homepage.

10% (per

http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_NP01&prodType=narrative_profile)

3.11 Child Poverty Rate

Please report the percentage of your community's youth that is below the federal poverty level.

This information may be obtained at the U.S. Census Bureau's new American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Please use ACS 20100 1-year estimates for your response. For information on using the new FactFinder, Please see the FAQs on the *100 Best* homepage.

11.9% (per

http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_NP01&prodType=narrative_profile)

3.12 Unemployment Rate

Please report the percentage of your community's workforce that is currently unemployed.

This information may be obtained through the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics online at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/tables.htm>.

8.8% (between Feb. 2011-March 2012, per <http://www.bls.gov/lau/laucntycur14.txt>)

3.13 Post-Secondary Education Rate

Please report the percentage of your community's population age 25 or higher with a B.A./B.S. degree or higher.

This information may be obtained at the U.S. Census Bureau's new American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Please use ACS 20100 1-

year estimates for your response. For information on using the new FactFinder, Please see the FAQs on the *100 Best* homepage.

32%

Section 4: Youth Testimonials

(30 points of a total 500)

An essential component of your work in communities should be youth voice and leadership. Please have two youth from your community submit written testimonials of up to 1,000 words supporting your application. Each testimonial should include the young person's name, age and affiliation within the community. These testimonials may not be written or edited by adults.

4.1 Youth Testimonial #1

How has your community supported you in planning for a great future? Be sure to include examples of supports in school and out of school, organizations that have empowered you and the unique opportunities for young people in your community.

(1,000 word maximum)

Mariah D. Meyers, Age 17, Midland High School student

I have gone through so much more than your typical teenager. Between discovering a brain tumor on my pituitary gland during the summer before my sophomore year and becoming pregnant at the very end of my sophomore year, my high school career and teenage years took a complete turn. During my hard times, the Midland community helped me to the very best of its abilities and never for a second left my side.

Midland High School has helped through the most. I never thought that principals and teachers could make such an impact on a student, but no doubt about it, they did. Every teacher, specifically Mark Camilleri, Angela Kerr, Georgina Leach, and Monique Albright, that I have had and my homebound teacher, Jen Joseph, have helped me with everything you could imagine. I received all of the extra help I needed and so much advice that gets me further and further every day. My counselor, Sueann Mcmillian, has helped to make it possible to graduate early and begin college before officially graduating. Midland High School will leave one of the biggest influences on me; it has treated me as well as the rest of its students as more than just a handful of kids they get paid to teach.

MHS isn't the only part of the Midland community that has helped me to get on the path I am now. The MidMichigan Medical Center, the Young Lives Club, the Pregnancy Resource Center, as well as all of the individuals who make up our community have held my hand through the hard times and have supported me through everything.

The Midland hospital is by far the best hospital I have ever entered. Even though it is full of sick or hurt patients, you always see an inviting smile from everyone. Not only do the patients welcome you, the phenomenal staff does too. When I was constantly getting tests done on my brain and when I delivered my son on November 27, I had so many friendly nurses and doctors who not only checked vitals but made me feel comfortable, chatted with me, gave me advice, put a smile on my face, and reminded me that I am a tough young woman who can make it through anything.

After I had my son they directed me toward the Pregnancy Resource Center to help me with anything that I may need in the future. Not only did the PRC help me, but they gave a nice quiet place for Midland's teen mothers to go and talk and get advice from somebody who is walking in the same shoes as you. Through the PRC, I was introduced to the Young Lives Club. This is a small get together for teen mothers at a local church. For an hour or so, they provide childcare so that moms can relax and have fun with those who need it just as much. At the club you talk about problems, vent, or share how proud you are of yourself or your little one.

I didn't need anyone to show me the people who make up our wonderful community; because from day one they surrounded me. One might never understand how much friendly smiles can make someone's day or how polite gestures are just that extra push that you need. The individuals just help so much more than I ever thought possible. Nobody judges or tries to put you down, they just try to help and give any advice that they possibly can.

I can truly say that I would not want to raise my son in any place but Midland, Michigan. I feel that my parents made the best choice for my siblings and me by moving us from a small rural area of simple people to a large, loving community.

I am proud to be a part of the Midland community, and I thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for all that you have done for me. Midland knows the definitions and actions for the words love and care.

4.2 Youth Testimonial #2

How has your community supported you in planning for a great future? Be sure to include examples of supports in school and out of school, organizations that have empowered you and the unique opportunities for young people in your community.

(1,000 word maximum)

Brett Bassage, 15, Midland Day Treatment Program

I cough as smoke fills my lungs; I choke as the hard liquor fills my mouth. I'm at my house but I recognize next to no one. The loud music scrambles my already jumbled thoughts... jumbled from the depression that the alcohol was meant to cure. I'm in hell but can do nothing to stop it nor do I want to.

That's exactly how my life used to be. Never anything planned just always playing it by ear, waiting for the next fix. It was a life of blackness that I don't entirely remember but I can remember enough to know I was a prisoner of my own mind and actions. Things were bad, real bad.

Everything started when one day I decided I didn't want to go to school anymore. Who needs an education, right? Well, fact of the matter is, everyone does. Without one you probably won't get far in life. But that didn't matter then.

After landing myself in serious trouble while already being on probation, I ended up in lockup. I never thought how badly things could really get until I spent a month in a concrete cell with a lot of time to think.

I realized, things are terrible and MUST change. No questions asked.

My probation officer at the time was Diana Larue. She soon became a good support system and helped with almost anything I needed.

The next step was (Midland County's) Day Treatment. I started the program like everyone else - a kid who cares about nothing and doesn't take direction. Boy, did I learn quickly. There is pretty much two options, one you can rebel and do twice the time or you can learn and save a lot of headaches.

I received a mentor through Day Treatment who became a very good friend who supports me with anything I want to do. You would be amazed the difference that's made when people believe in you.

There is a very long list of great people who will do the best they can to help you if you let them. Ms. Di soon got me guitar lessons at Mid-Michigan Music. Guitar being my passion was the best outlet I had whenever I needed to vent. I didn't have to ask anyone, tell anyone my problems, and yet I expressed them through music. So in a sense that was the best gift I could receive.

Later in my Day Treatment experience, I began to volunteer at Midland Community Center as a junior counselor for summer camps. I didn't know much about it at first except that I wasn't a fan of little kids, and that happened to be all that I was working with for the summer. As I progressed with learning to handle kids, I began to appreciate them much more and it was a great overall experience.

There was another program through J&A counseling that made a huge impact on me. Substance abuse. Out of all the different groups I experienced during Day Treatment, this one took the cake. I learned so much about all of the things I did to my body that it disgusted me, and then I knew for certain it was time to change.

As I reached the end of my Day Treatment days, I was informed that I would be going back to my former high school for half days. I couldn't believe it! I could almost be a normal kid again. I had nothing to hide and very little stress without procrastination lurking in my mind.

After a short period of this, I released from Day Treatment and from probation shortly afterward. After 365 days in Day Treatment, I could finally reclaim my life for full days at Midland High, starting second semester of my sophomore year fresh. I am currently an honors student with a 3.3 GPA and outstanding attendance.

My life was terrible and imprisoned, now it's free and easy. Without the hassles and stress of all the things that took my time back then, I find myself with plenty of time to share with the ones I love and all of my friends, instead of being incarcerated. I have matured much more than I ever thought possible, and make good decisions every day to make sure I never land in the slammer again.

You don't really appreciate everything you really have until all of it is stripped away from you and you can do nothing to stop it. You feel powerless, hopeless, and distant. Too distant for my liking. I had far too many people to let down if I messed up. Just one slip, and it would have all been for nothing.

With the support of a close group of genuinely caring people, you would be surprised to find that you may emerge with a whole new persona and outlook on everything.

The biggest advice to take in is never give up. Things will get hard sometimes. But the sun will always rise again, and so will a new day, so make it count. Spend it with your loved ones rather than your drug dealer or behind bars - they lose almost as much as you do as soon as you're gone, and you aren't coming back for a while if you're locked up.

I plan to attend college and receive my masters in business to someday open my own shop to sell guitar merchandise. Set goals, long term and short term, that way you always have something to stand for and look forward to.

I have learned so much that I will always take with me wherever I go to avoid sticky situations so I can just be who I want to be.

If I could take it all back, would I? Not at all. I wouldn't be the man I am today without all the help I have received. I would probably still be the boy hiding behind drugs to conceal his thoughts and conflicted emotions.